

February 7, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PSC TO UPDATE BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT INFORMATION

LINCOLN – Providers of broadband services will have until February 28 to provide input as the Public Service Commission updates a three-year-old study on the state of broadband deployment in Nebraska.

Fifth District Commissioner Jerry Vap of McCook said, “In the last three years, service providers have accelerated deployment of broadband in Nebraska. The Commission’s 2002 study indicated broadband services were available much more extensively than anticipated. I believe this study update is timely and appropriate.”

The new study will be conducted by the Commission’s Telecommunications and Universal Service Fund departments. The study will quantify whether residential customers as well as businesses of all sizes have reasonable access to broadband and will survey the current rates the various providers charge for broadband services.

“This is an effort to bring it all together,” Commissioner Frank Landis of Lincoln said. “High speed Internet and economic development go hand in hand. It’s essential this Commission does everything in its power to promote the spread of broadband throughout the state.”

Vap said involvement of the Universal Service Fund in the study should be expected. “Universal Service Fund monies are invested in the evolution of rural networks and these networks must be capable of providing broadband services.”

The Commissioners noted that broadband is available from a variety of sources. In addition to traditional telephone providers, broadband is currently available from cable television companies, Internet service providers as well as providers using satellite technology.

In its order seeking comment, the Commission recognized the difficulties in bringing broadband options to rural communities. “An accurate measurement of the availability of broadband services is vital to our understanding of the issues that can be addressed,” Commissioner Landis said.

“The new study will update the work we have done in the past in infrastructure development and deployment,” Landis said.

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